



Opportunities for rural areas coming from the NRPPs

Rural Pact in My Country - Latvia

9 June 2026



NRPP specific objectives: rural areas

Art. 3 NRP Reg.

(a) To support the Union's **sustainable prosperity** across all regions

(b) To support the Union's defence capabilities and security across all regions

(c) To strengthen **social cohesion** by supporting people and strengthening the **Union's societies** and the Union's social model

(d) To sustain the **quality of life** in the Union

(e) To protect and strengthen fundamental rights, **democracy**, the rule of law and to uphold Union values by

(i) Fostering the attractiveness of territories to support the right to stay including by supporting **STRATEGIES FOR THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN AND RURAL AREAS**, including support for territorial services and infrastructure.

(iii) Improving the **ATTRACTIVENESS AND LIVING STANDARDS**, including access to healthcare, in rural areas and fair work conditions and fostering generational renewal; improving farmers' preparedness and ability to cope with crisis and risks; enhancing the access to knowledge and innovation and accelerating the digital and green transition for a thriving agri-food sector.

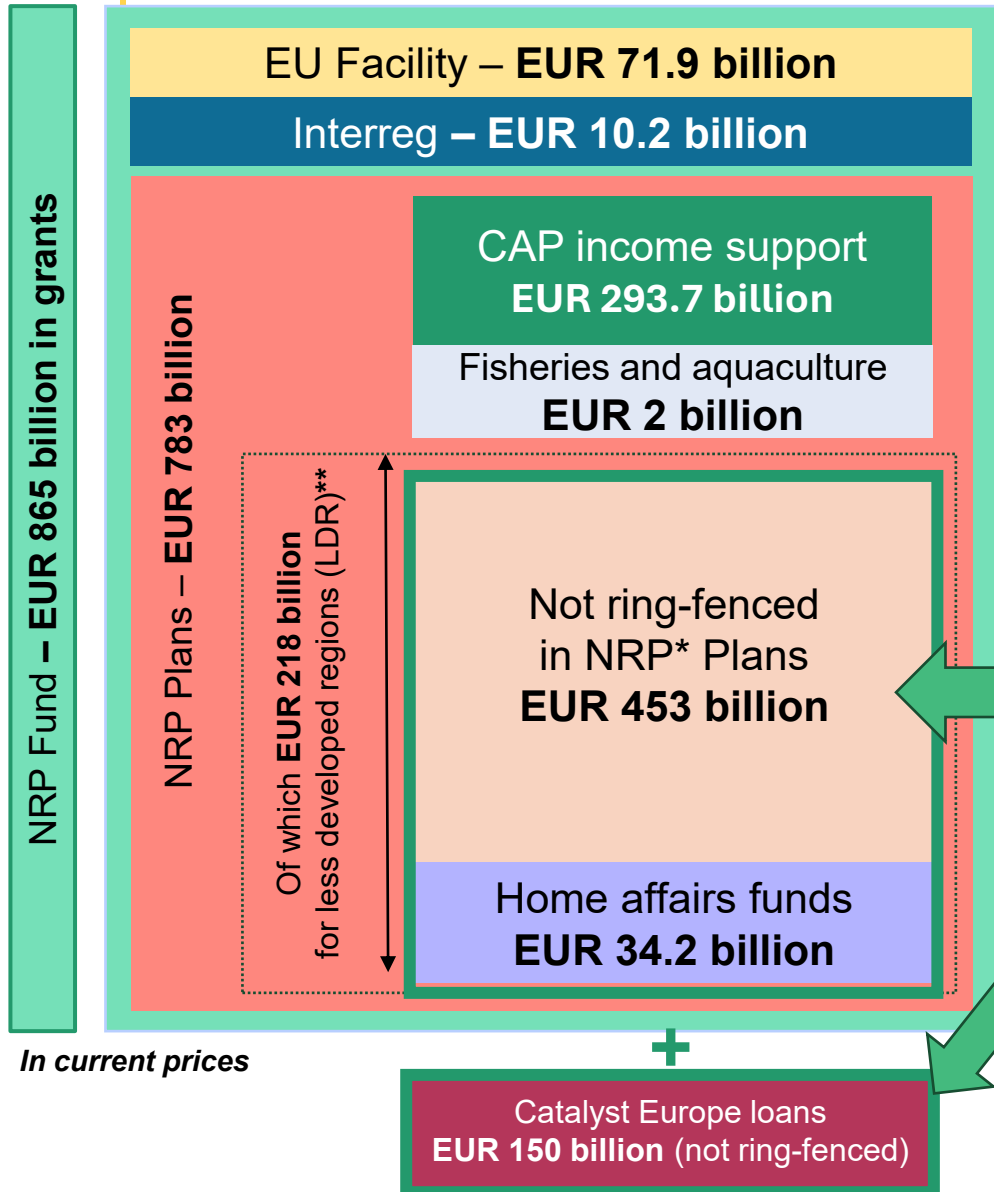
The rural target

Under discussion following proposal from the Commission to the co-legislators (Nov 2025).

Objective: Ensure that rural areas continue to benefit from targeted investments in their development. MS and regions are expected to build a **consistent agenda of measures addressing rural areas' specific needs and challenges**, building on **synergies across all policy areas**.

10% of each plan's NRP envelope (total Union allocation including Catalyst Europe loans, excluding the social climate fund, the EU facility and minimum amounts for CAP and CFP income support to agriculture and fisheries).

EUR 48,7 billion > EU 63,7 billion if loans are used



In current prices

** CAP and CFP interventions above the ringfenced amounts may be counted towards the earmarking for less developed regions provided they are for the benefit of those regions



Which instruments to support rural areas?



A **comprehensive toolbox of instruments...**



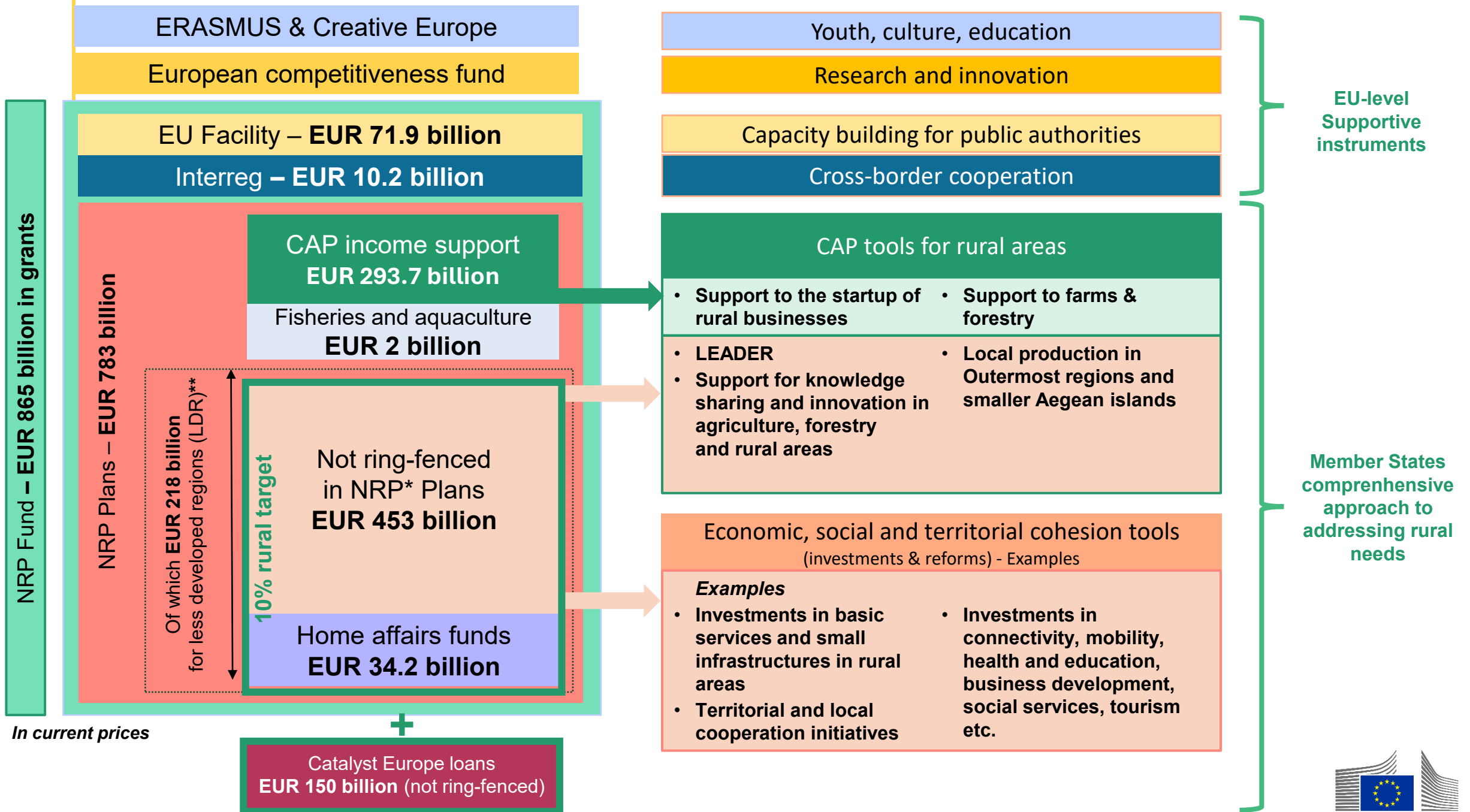
...from the **agriculture policy domain and other domains**



improving **coordination** and increasing **complementarities** and **synergies**



Integrated planning under the NRP plans will help look at challenges in **holistic** terms, bringing together **different policies and funding streams**.



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'Territorial' requirements for NRP Plans

- **Reduce economic, social and territorial disparities** in less developed, transition and more developed regions, including by focusing on specific needs of **border regions, northern sparsely populated regions, rural, island and outermost regions, urban areas, and areas affected by industrial transition**, based on methodology in **annex VII** (article 22)
- Effectively contribute to promoting the use of **territorial and local cooperation** interventions, including **integrated territorial investments** in ... **rural and coastal areas**, community-led local development or other territorial tools including just transition and smart specialisation strategies, **LEADER** (article 22)
- *Rationale (recital 31): need to ensure **complementarity and synergies** between different measures supporting different policy areas and targeting different groups of beneficiaries, to offer a **comprehensive policy response to develop thriving rural areas**, develop **integrated planning** to ensure rural communities have **access to finance through appropriate mechanisms**, **governance structures to coordinate** programming and implementation, taking into account the **specific context of target beneficiaries**; need to provide **capacity building** for both administrations and beneficiaries*



Relevant (descriptive) planning elements

Annex V NRP Fund Regulation (NRP template):

- Title 1 (overall Plan)

- Part 1

- Section 1.1 Support to general and **specific objectives** (Art. 2 and 3) – including **those addressing rural areas explicitly**
- Section 1.2 **Description of challenges and related measures**
- Section 1.5 Comprehensive overview of the Plan's support to the **territories listed in annex VII** > including **“Rural areas”**
- Section 1.9 Comprehensive overview of the planned use of **integrated territorial development tools** (incl. CLLD/LEADER)
- Section 1.10 Comprehensive overview of How the Plans effectively contribute to addressing risk management and **digital transition** (including in rural areas)

Relevant (descriptive) planning elements

Annex V NRP Fund Regulation (NRP template):

- Title 2 (Chapters *including measures within chapters*)
 - Section 1.1- 1.2 **Intervention strategy** (description of needs/challenges/objectives and how the measures address them)
 - Section 1.3 **Description of synergies** of the measures included in the chapter (and, if applicable with other measures in other chapters of the plan or with national measures)
 - Section 2.3 incl. description of the **targeting of the measures** set out in the Plan. - *Art. 36.1 (f)*
 - Section 2.7 territorial dimension of the measure (**territorial tagging – including for code 02- rural areas**)
 - Section 8 Coordination / demarcation and **complementarities** (how the measures included in the Plan are coherent with other measures supported by other Union instruments) – *Art. 7.5*

Spending target Rural and territorial codes

For rural areas

- **Proposed tracking methodology** based on **territorial codes** (Annex II of performance regulation), relevant measures will be tagged with territorial code “**02-Rural areas**”.

Territorial codes

- Part 1: Urban/**Rural**/Areas affected by industrial transition/Islands and coastal areas/Other types of territories targeted/Sparse populated areas/No territorial targeting.
- Part 2: Outermost regions/Small Aegean Islands/**Eastern border region**/Northern sparsely populated areas
- Part 3: Integrated territorial and urban development/**CLLD-LEADER**/Other territorial tools
- Part 4: Nuts2

Defining 'rural areas'

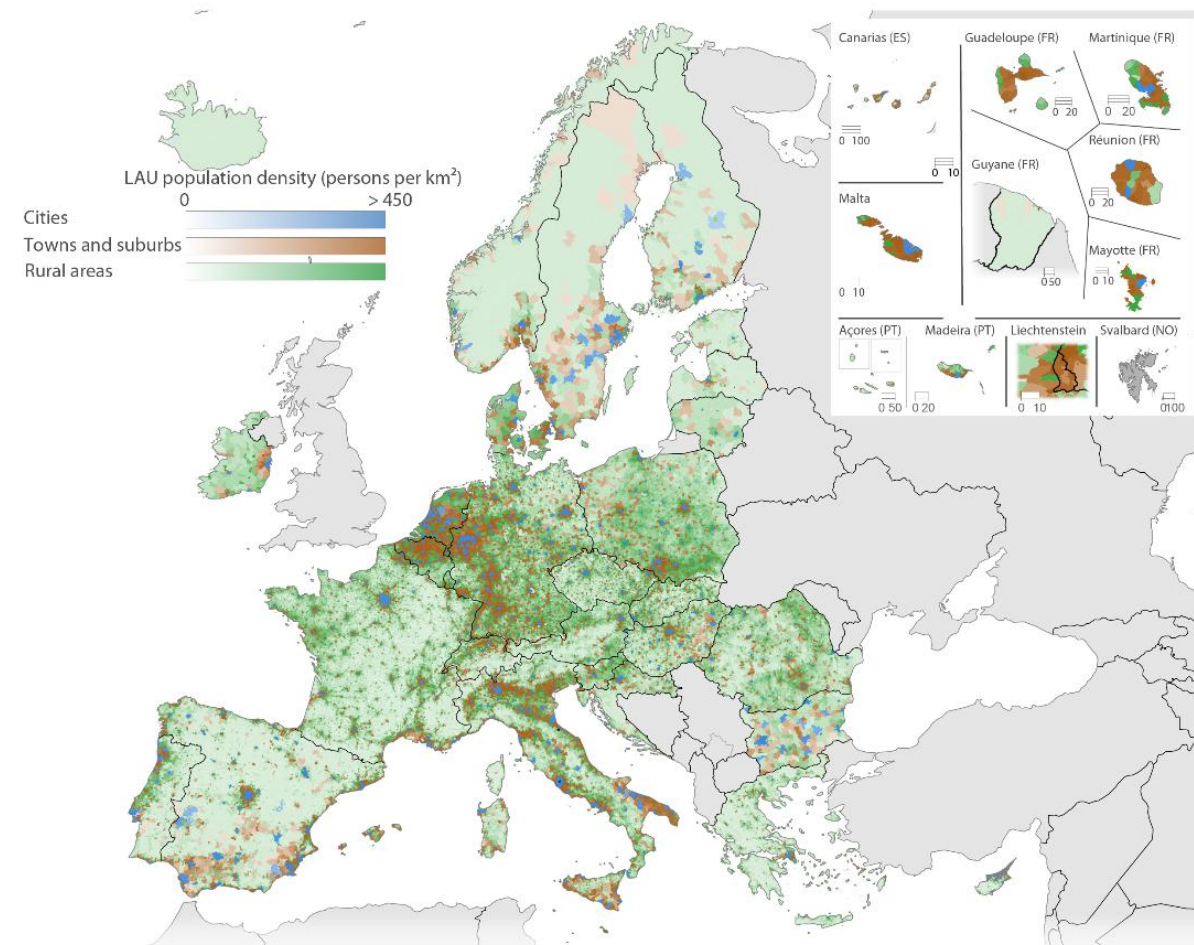
Today (CAP strategic plans): very wide diversity of definitions.

Tomorrow (NRPPs): perceived need for common approach to bring a level playing field across policy domains and ensure funds go to rural territories

Proposal (under discussion at the Council):

- **Local administrative units (LAU) classified as 'rural areas'** under the European territorial typology 'degree of urbanisation'.
- **Possibility to derogate to adjust the classification to take into account national, regional or territorial specificities** (examples of objective criteria discussed: high population density, or insularity).

Degree of urbanisation, 2021



eurostat

Source: Eurostat (based on Census Population Grid 2021 and Local Administrative Units 2021)

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat
Cartography: Eurostat – IMAGE, 07/2024

Rural areas: 25% of population – 75% of land



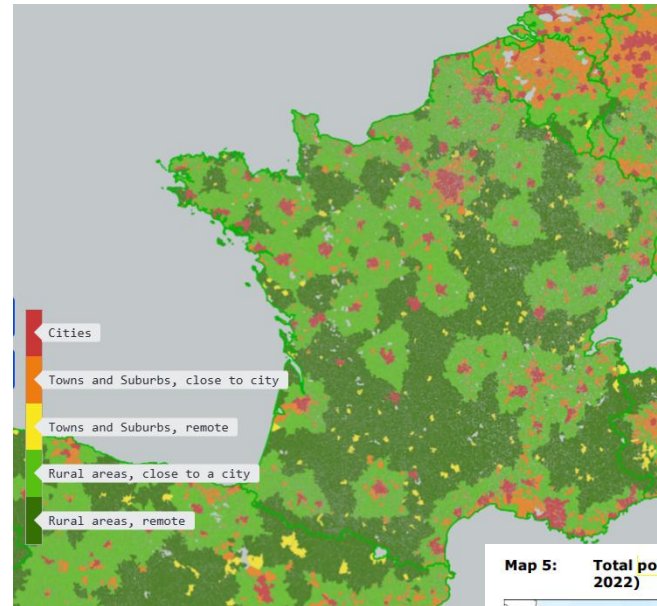
Targeting specific types of rural areas

Possible targeting criteria:

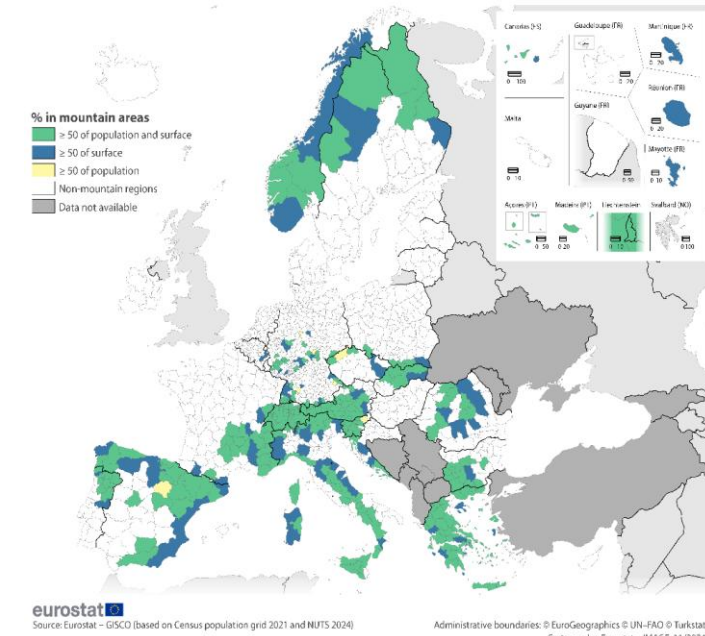
- Remoteness
- Demographic challenges
- Geographic constraints
- Eastern border regions
- Northern sparsely populated areas
- Etc.

Useful resources on targeting:

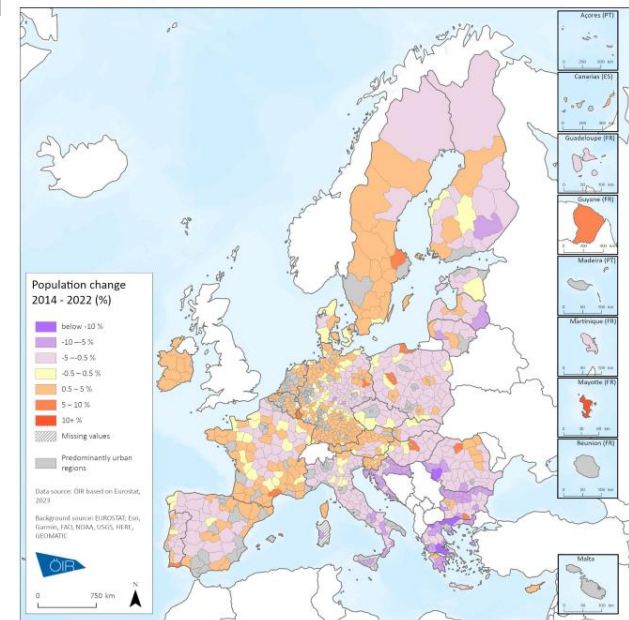
- [Study on EU funds for rural areas](#)
- [OECD Enhancing rural resilience report](#)



Mountain typology (NUTS 2024)



Map 5: Total population change in rural and intermediate regions (EU-27, 2014-2022)



Source: Project team, 2024.

Multi-sector support through community led local development (CLLD) including LEADER

- LEADER is **mandatory** at least in **rural areas facing specific disadvantages**.
- Implemented through **integrated territorial development strategies** > Efficient for social capital, community resilience, business development, social inclusion, services.
- Possibility to **extend to a broad set of policy sectors** > easier with the new framework

- *Example Poland (Multi-fund CLLD) – current programming period example*
- 190 multi-fund local development strategies
- A holistic set of priorities:
 - Economic diversification, local food systems, smart villages (CAP)
 - Infrastructure and village renewal, green transition (ERDF)
 - Employment and job, training, social inclusion and lifelong learning (ESF)



Unlocking synergies and adopting an integrated approach

The **NRP Plan** should:

- comprise a comprehensive and coherent **package of measures**.
- set out **coherent approaches** to addressing challenges, at the appropriate level
- Justify **complementarity and synergies** between different measures supporting different policy areas and targeting different groups of beneficiaries – Art. 22.2 (n); including coordination, consistency and synergies with other Union programmes and instruments – Art. 4



A comprehensive policy response through national and regional rural strategies

- Holistic strategies for the development of rural areas at **national and regional levels** can be useful to organise a more comprehensive policy response to rural needs under the NRPPs.
- The NRPP framework creates **ideal conditions to support such strategies** in coherence with national and regional instruments.
- Resources are available to help Member States who would wish to develop those:
 - [Making the Rural Pact happen in Member States | Rural Pact Community Platform](#)
 - [OECD Principles on Rural Policy | OECD](#)
 - Examples: [Advancing the Rural Pact: country-specific information | Rural Pact Community Platform](#)
- The next **High-level rural policy forum** on **3-4 November** in Naas, Ireland, will focus on this aspect.



Thank you



<https://rural-vision.europa.eu/>

